

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman

Tsunetaro Miyakoda

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Editors

Chuzo Yamada

~~Dorothy Burt
Ronald G. Korver
Umeko Kagawa~~

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AID TO HOKKAIDO

Both Church World Service and the Salvation Army in Japan are planning to include destitute Hokkaido families affected by unseasonal weather and ensuing farm crop failure, in their annual Christmas aid plans of this year.

Church World Service has appealed to Christian schools, churches, and organizations for contributions of cash, school supplies, clothing, etc., which will be sent to 29 schools in Hokkaido for distribution to needy students.

The Salvation Army will increase the number of its "mercy kettles" and set aside 10% of contributions for the needy in Hokkaido. The remainder will, as in previous years, be used to provide shelter and food at least for a few days for those without, gifts for the aged and physically handicapped, and a Christmas party for children of the slums and river boats.

According to Japanese government reports, due to an unprecedented early and severe winter, besides poor growing conditions during the summer, crop damages have been the most serious to date for the northern island of Hokkaido. A total of 155,000 of the 210,000 farmers on Hokkaido are suffering, with only 53,000 being able to harvest 50 per cent of their crops.

SERVICE CENTER

On Friday, December 4, 1964, Mrs. Toyohiko Kagawa dug the first shovel of dirt at the site of a new community center to be built by the Iyesu Dan, Jesus Band, in the Tōryo government housing project of 1,500 families on the south side of Kyoto.

Yuaikan, the new center, is the answer to the increasing demand from young parents of Tōryō during the three years since the apartments were built, for child care facilities as well as a place for activities for older children and

adults. The government offered a 960-square foot piece of land in the center of the housing project and 5 million yen (\$14,000) to any group which would build and administer the center. The Iyesu Dan, which agreed to raise an additional 15 million yen (\$41,500) and to build and administer the center, is an organization carrying on the work of Toyohiko Kagawa, famous Christian pastor and social worker, and now directed by Dr. Kagawa's 76-year old widow, Mrs. Haru Kagawa.

The new two-story concrete community center, to be completed in May, 1965, will have rooms for Boy Scouts, after-school study, mothers' club, counselling, small groups, and other welfare and cultural services, in addition to a nursery and kindergarten.

Director of the program will be the Rev. Mr. Kazuyoshi Kimura, a United Church of Christ pastor who served for 6 years as a pastor in Osaka Shikanjima Church, labor evangelism center. Mr. Kimura will also be assistant pastor of the Church of the Light of the World, near the Toryo apartments. This church was begun after the war as a rural pioneer evangelism project. Now, due to the rapid expansion of the city, it lies between the remaining farms in the area and the new blocks of apartments for industrial workers.

BRASS BAND EVANGELISM

The organization of brass bands by industrial concerns throughout Japan presents a new channel for effective Christian service and a means of sharing the Good News.

The great interest in western music by Japanese as evidenced, for example, by the thousands of choruses in churches, schools, factories and elsewhere, has been and continues to be an effective area of work for Christians skilled in this area of music. The mushrooming of brass bands in schools, especially during the last ten years, has resulted in the formation of brass bands by former members of these bands who are now employed in industrial concerns. It is said that there are more than 100 such industrial school bands graduate and move into business and industry that many more companies will attempt to organize bands. The 12th Annual National Band Contest was held on November 8 with Jr. High, Sr. High, College and Industrial divisions.

Occupational Evangelism of the United Church of Christ in Japan has encouraged the Church to provide leaders and participants in workers' choruses for many years and is now actively encouraging participation in industrial bands.

Merle I. Kelly, missionary of the Presbyterian Church U.S., cooperating with the Interboard-related work in Japan, who is now an instructor in Band and Orchestra at Kinjo Gakuin, Nagoya, and Shikoku Gakuin, has offered his services to those requesting information and other help.

At present Mr. Kelly is having one of the finest Beginner Band Methods translated into Japanese. He says, "I think God can be glorified and men and women can come to know Jesus Christ through the witness that can be made through musical organizations."

ROMAN CATHOLIC TOKYO DIOCESE DEDICATES ¥700 MILLION CATHEDRAL

Peter Tatsuo Cardinal Doi, archbishop of Tokyo, dedicated a new cathedral in Tokyo, on December 8.

Designed by Kenzo Tange, a professor at Tokyo University who designed the most striking structures for the Olympic Games, the new cathedral's four sweeping concrete roofs, which also serve as walls, meet to form a cross, 34 meters from the ground.

The structure will seat about 600 with standing room for an additional 2,000.

Construction of the ¥700 million cathedral began in 1962 and stands on the site of a church structure destroyed in an air raid in 1945.

More than half of the total cost of construction was raised by West German Catholics under the leadership of Arch Bishop Josef Cardinal Frings of Cologne. The balance was raised by Catholics and non Catholics in Japan.

A TALKING BIBLE IN JAPANESE

A new type of ministry of love has been proposed and actively supported by Mr. Ishiro Shishido, a Christian layman of Tokyo. Although Mr. Shishido has made his place in the technical world as an electrical equipment engineer, his active life has been halted by cancer and the medical prognosis promises no more than two or three years of life for him. His personal evangelistic ventures in visiting the prisoners of Fuchu Prison in western Tokyo stimulated him to decide to give as much of his remaining, bed-ridden years as possible to bringing the recorded words of Scripture to prisoners, the blind and other bed-ridden sufferers. His ambition came to the attention of Mr. Mathew Ogawa, executive Director of AVACO, who has obtained the approval of the AVACO Board to undertake this project, and has gained from Mr. Toru Ohira, the famous radio and television personality, the promise of complete cooperation in making the recordings in the AVACO Studios. The Sony Corporation, one of Japan's largest electrical Equipment manufacturers, has been contacted for the contribution of tapes for distribution. However, additional support for this project in Japan and from overseas will be warmly welcomed.

ANNUAL AVACO "CHRISTMAS NO YUBE" AND TELEVISION CANDLE SERVICE

At the Setagayá Public Hall on December 22, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m., the annual Christmas program sponsored by AVACO will be presented. This program is open to the public, and plans for the 2-hour program include the talents of the "Three Graces", the popular Christian girls' vocal trio, the Story of Christmas presented through color filmstrips and the Froiebel Children's Choir, a popular organist, and the Swinan Bunku Choir under the direction of Mr. Sumimoto Kagawa, son of the late Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa. Public singing of carols, the Christmas sermon and the traditional Candle Service will complete the public Christmas service. The latter part of the program will be videotaped by TBS and the 30-minute telecast is scheduled for Christmas Eve at 5-05 p.m. Sponsors of this telecast will be the Juju Cosmetic Company, and the Izumiya Confections Company. The whole endeavor will involve participation by Christians from many denominational groups.

BIBLE SOCIETY HEAD RESIGNS

The Rev. Tsunetaro Miyakoda, who for the past fifteen years has been general secretary of the Japan Bible Society and, in that position, has travelled throughout the world, has resigned at the expiration of his term of service, having served two years beyond the mandatory retirement age. The board of directors, which accepted his resignation at its December 7, 1964, meeting, said announcement of the new general secretary would be made at a later date. Director Toyosuke Shimoda has been asked to serve in the interim.

In the post-war period approximately 35 million Scriptures and portions have been distributed in Japan, making Japan third in the world in Scripture distribution. During Mr. Miyakoda's administration, the first colloquial version of

the Bible was translated and published, and the work of Bible colporteurs, in house-to-house visitation was greatly expanded, with increasing cooperation on the part of local churches.

The Japan Bible Society is now in the midst of the three-year "Word of God for a New Age" campaign, a world-wide Bible Societies' program aimed at increasing three-fold the distribution of the Scriptures, taking into account the rising literacy rate in many countries, as well as the increasing populations.

In connection with his contacts with the Bible Societies in many lands, Mr. Miyakoda has visited Africa, Europe, Asia, and America. In Japan, he has served on the executive committee of the National Christian Council, as chief director of the Audio-Visuals Aids Commission of the NCC, and on the board of directors of a number of Christian institutions. He was graduated from the Aoyama Gakuin Theological Seminary, Tokyo, and Union Seminary, New York.

Figures just released show that in 1964 distribution of Bibles, and portions of the Bible, totalled 4 million copies, an all-time high and an amazing number in a country where Christian adherents number under 3 per cent of the total population.

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